

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY LOME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 189

INFO AMEMBASSY ACCRA

AMEMBASSY CONAKRY

C O N F I D E N T I A L L O M E 0249

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MILI, PFOR, XA

SUBJECT: REGIONAL ARMS RESTRAINTS

REF: STATE 020621

1. OVER THE PAST FOUR YEARS, TOGO HAS STEADILY EXPANDED SIZE AND IMPROVED QUALITY OF ITS MILITARY FORCES. EXPANSION HAS BEEN MOTIVATED BY: 1) CONSIDERATIONS OF NATIONAL PRESTIGE; 2) DESIRE OF MILITARY CHIEF OF STATE TO KEEP HIS COMRADES IN ARMS PROFESSIONALLY OCCUPIED; 3) DESIRE TO MAINTAIN CREDIBLE POSTURE OF MILITARY SUPERIORITY RELATIVE TO ITS UNPREDICTABLE NEIGHBOR; BENIN; AND 4) NEED TO HAVE MEANINGFUL MILITARY POSTURE AS IT PREPARES TO PUSH IRREDENTIST CLAIMS TO EASTERN REGION OF GHANA (FORMERLY BRITISH TOGOLAND). RESTRAINTS ON THIS POLICY OF GROWTH ARE PRIMARILY BUDGETARY AND, SECONDARILY, PRUDENT DESIRE TO GO SLOWLY SO THAT NEW ACQUISITIONS AND MANPOWER CAN BE ABSORBED BY EXISTING MILITARY STRUCTURE. BUDGETARY RESTRAINTS WERE TEMPORARILY REDUCED BY 1974 WINDFALL IN PHOSPHATE EARNINGS. THEY ARE ALSO MITIGATED BY WILLINGNESS OF ASIAN COMMUNISTS TO SUPPLY FREE ARMS. TOGOLESE BUILD-UP IS BOTH FACILITATED AND RESTRAINED BY RESIDENT FRENCH MILITARY ADVISORS.

2. QUALITATIVE RESTRAINTS IN DEVELOPMENT OF TOGOLESE ARMED

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FORCES ALSO EXIST. ALTHOUGH TOGOLESE ARE ACQUIRING JET AIRCRAFT

AND HIGH-SPEED PATROL BOATS, WHICH FOR LONG TIME WILL HAVE TO BE MANNED BY EXPATRIATE (FRENCH) CREWS, CLEARLY TECHNOLOGICAL BARRIERS PLACE TRULY SOPHISTICATED SUPERSONICS, MISSILES AND MODERN TANKS FAR BEYOND TOGOLESE REACH.

3. EMBASSY CAN SEE NO REALISTIC ROLE FOR U.S. GOVERNMENT IN ENCOURAGING ARMS RESTRAINT IN TOGO. TOGO'S ARMS BUILD-UP HAS BEEN STIMULATED BY PRIORITY CONCERNS OF TOGO'S PRESENT LEADERS. UNTIL THEY HAVE ACHIEVED THEIR (PROBABLY UNREALIZABLE) REGIONAL AMBITIONS, THEY WILL NEITHER APPRECIATE NOR ACCEPT OUTSIDE EFFORTS TO PLACE LIMITS ON TOGOLESE MILITARY FORCES.
RAWLS

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